

## **Evolution of Turkish Foreign Policy From Ataturk to Gul (1924-2009)**

**Ihmoud Ali Abusalim\***

### **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the Turkish foreign policy from numerous perspectives and to clarify the different regional, historical and ideological factors affecting this policy. It will exhibit different opinions regarding which of them is of greater effect, and which is a more direct motive for Turkey's actions and responses to different world events, whether its ideology or pragmatics. Through this analysis, the integration of these factors together to shape the structure of Turkey's foreign policy as a whole should be noticed. This study also discusses Turkey's stance towards different regional and international events, the treaties and agreements it signed, and the conflicts it had or still having with neighbors, allies and other countries around the world. This analysis will consider the period extending from the end of the Ottoman Empire through Kamel Ataturk , Turgut Ozal, the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi ) or the Justice and Development Party, also called White Party, to Abdulla Gul and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, analyzing the foreign policy of the Turkish Government during their different reigns ending with the latest event of the European gas pipeline deal .

**Keywords:** Ideology, Pragmatic, Foreign Policy.

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\* قسم التاريخ، كلية العلوم الاجتماعية، جامعة مؤتة، الكرك، الأردن.

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## تقيم السياسة الخارجية التركية من أتاتورك الى غول (1924-2009)

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### ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل السياسة الخارجية التركية وتوضيح العوامل الإقليمية والتاريخية والأيدولوجية المختلفة المؤثرة في تلك السياسة. ولقد عمدت الدراسة إلى تحليل وجهات النظر المختلفة حول أي من هذه العوامل الأكثر تأثيراً والمباشر في توجيه السياسة الخارجية التركية، ومن ثم الأفعال وردود الأفعال التركية اتجاه مجموعة من القضايا والأحداث على المستويين الإقليمي والدولي سواء كان ذلك التأثير ذات طابع أيديولوجي أو براماتي.

وسوف تقوم الدراسة في تحليل التداخل بين مجموعة العوامل المؤثرة في السياسة الخارجية التركية ومن ثم الموقف التركي من الأحداث الإقليمية والدولية ومدى تأثير ذلك على العلاقات التركية مع دول الإقليم بشكل خاص ومع البيئة الدولية بشكل عام. ولقد شملت هذه الدراسة الفترة الزمنية الممتدة منذ نهاية الإمبراطورية العثمانية إلى الوقت الحاضر وتفاعل الحكومات التركية المتعاقبة مع الأحداث الدولية والإقليمية منذ بداية النظام العلماني في تركيا على يد مصطفى كمال أتاتورك إلى عهد الرئيس التركي الحالي عبدالله غول، والعوامل التاريخية والأيدولوجية والإقليمية التي أثرت في تلك السياسة. وسوف تتناول الدراسة بالتحليل بعد تتبّع البعد التاريخي للسياسة الخارجية التركية، البعدين الأيدولوجي والإقليمي ومدى تأثير كل منهما في توجيه السياسة الخارجية التركية علماً بأن العامل السياسي الداخلي سوف لن يقل أهمية عن العوامل الأخرى المؤثرة في تلك السياسة.

الكلمات الدالة: أيديولوجي، براماتي، سياسة خارجية.

## Introduction

The importance of Turkey arises because of varying factor each which are the same factors that lead its foreign policy. Yasemin Celik (1999) in her book "Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy", stated that: "It has repeatedly been said that Turkey's historical role and relative political importance rest, in large measure, on its incomparable geographical location because various aspects of Turkey's geography have played an important role in shaping its foreign policy."<sup>(1)</sup> It has a strategic location as a link between Europe and the Middle East, a link between East and West, though it did at a time seem to ignore its Eastern identity and follow the European identity quest after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I and the rejection of the Ottoman Era claims to the Middle East which was Atatürk's most revolutionary and pragmatic decision. Graham Fuller (2008) in "Turkey's Strategic model: Myths and Realities" states that: "The essence of Atatürkism oriented Turkey firmly toward the West to transform it into an advanced and westernized state. For well more than half a century under the rule of Atatürkists, Turkey behaved almost literally as if the Middle East did not exist. That region represented an unhappy association with Turkey's past"<sup>(2)</sup> Though we must recall, at the time most of the Middle Eastern countries were colonized and under European power and therefore the Kemalists (cliché of Kemal Atatürk) lost hope of reasserting influence in the region. Along with their prejudice against Muslims and Arabs, this was a reason to focus on European affairs. It later realized with the rise of the AKP the importance of both identities and of keeping relations with both sides, so it's reengagement with the region (Middle Eastern countries) was clearly a priority. When it comes to importance, it's inevitable to also mention the fact that Turkey has a history of being both Muslim and Secular. Due to its Islamic history Middle Eastern countries look up to it and constantly expect more of it.<sup>(3)</sup>

Accordingly, is it pragmatics, history, ideology, or all put together that controls this country's foreign policy? Philip Robins (1991) writes that "The strong ideological orientation given to Turkey by Atatürk contained an umbilical link between the Western value system of the Kemalist elite and the external orientation of the state,"<sup>(4)</sup> Nicholas Danforth (2008) in his article for [turkishpolicy.com](http://turkishpolicy.com), "Ideology and Pragmatism In Turkish Foreign Policy: From Atatürk To AKP", argued that it is indeed pragmatic rather than Islamic religious motives that drive Turkey's foreign policy. Danforth claims: "From Turkey's perspective, the most serious risk is that foreign policy makers would actually allow their ideology to shape their decisions instead of just their rhetoric. Given the strength of the historical precedent, though, and the fact that the broad contours of Turkey's current policy enjoy support from across the political spectrum, there is ample reason to believe that the tradition of pragmatism will prevail."<sup>(5)</sup> However, to agree or disagree with Danforth's claims is what this study will conclude at the end.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the general factors that drive Turkish foreign policy?
2. Which is the primary and most effective motive of these factors?
3. Does the diversity of Turkey's geographical, religious, and historical characteristics give it importance in the region?
4. What were the reasons behind Ataturk's disengagement and the AKP's reengagement from and to the Middle East?
5. What are the turning points in the structure of Turkey's foreign policy over the past century?
6. What was Turkey's stance on some of the main world events and how did this stance affect its relations with certain countries in the region and around the world?
7. What were the main characteristics of foreign policy followed by the Turkish Government during the reigns of its different leaders?

### **Research Methodology:**

This study will apply the historical methods for their importance to review the historical background of Turkish foreign policy through different stages since the end of the Ottoman Empire to the present. Although, the analytical method will be applied in this study in order to analyze the impact of each of the factors that affect Turkish foreign policy and to find out which factor contributes most to the shape of and directs Turkish foreign policy.

### **Organization of the Study:**

This study will be divided into four sections:

- i. Will include the Introduction, Research Questions and Research Methodology.
- ii. Will include the historical background of the Turkish political system: the end of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of Ataturk.
- iii. Will Include
  - a. The impact of the Cyprus Conflict on Turkish foreign policy.
  - b. The reign of Turgut Ozal and Neo-Ottomanism.

- c. From the Rise of AKP to the Present.
  - d. Turkey's Stance during the Israeli attacks on Gaza.
- iv. Conclusion
- ii. The End of the Ottoman Empire and The Rise of Ataturk:

The Ottoman Empire lasted from 1299 to November 1, 1922 (as a monarchy) or July 24, 1923 as a state. It was succeeded by the Republic of Turkey, which was officially proclaimed on October 29, 1923. At the height of its power (16th–17th century), it spanned three continents, controlling much of Southeastern Europe, Western Asia and North Africa. The Ottoman Empire contained 29 provinces, and it was at the center of interactions between the Eastern and Western worlds for six centuries. With Constantinople as its capital city, and vast control of lands around the eastern Mediterranean during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (ruled 1520 to 1566), the Ottoman Empire was, in many respects, an Islamic successor to the eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire.<sup>(6)</sup>

On July, 8, 1919 Mustafa Kemal resigned from the army and was dismissed by the Ottoman Government, two weeks later the National Congress met in Erzurum under his presidency when declarations of National Pact were issued, which were confirmed less than a month later. A Representative Committee was also established at the time. A month later the government resigned and on November 7 1919 a new Parliament was elected in Istanbul with Nationalist Representation. After that Kemal established headquarters in Ankara and the Pact was adopted, which included statements declaring that all former Ottoman territories with an Arab majority should be allowed to decide their future by voting.<sup>(7)</sup>

Istanbul was occupied by allies on March 16<sup>th</sup> 1920, six months later the peace treaty of Sevres, which was a peace treaty between the Ottoman Empire and the Allies, was signed by the Sultan's Government and then initialed between the Soviet Union and Nationalist Government in Moscow. On 28<sup>th</sup> of September 1920 Nationalist forces began to invade the region with Armenian revolts. At the end of the first World War (WWI), the Ottoman Empire had been defeated, all Ottoman Era claims to the Middle East were rejected, Mustafa Kamel had been given full power as Commander-in-Chief by the Grand National Assembly, and the Treaty of Lausanne was signed in Switzerland by Turkey and the Entente powers that fought in World War I. After the conclusion of the Turkish War of Independence, this treaty recognized the Republic of Turkey as a sovereign nation. The Turkish forces occupied Istanbul, following the Allied evacuation, and Ankara became the capital of Turkey, with Mustafa Kemal Attaturk as President.<sup>(8)</sup> Under his reign, the Progress Party was founded in 1924 then suppressed a year later. Religious schools were closed down, and organized Islam becomes regulated by the state, religious

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courts were also closed down and the emergence of Turkey as a secular state began. In 1926 the new civil law code was adopted. The Treaty of Ankara between Turkey, Britain and Iraq defining the borderline between Turkey and Iraq was signed. A plot to assassinate Ataturk, in Izmir was uncovered in 1926 and found to have originated with a former deputy who had opposed abolition of the caliphate and had a personal grudge against the President. Despite the attempted assassination he was re-elected in 1927 as President to go on promoting schools to teach the new Latin Language, he founded the Turkish Linguistic Society, there was even a decision to recite the call for prayer in Turkish. The Free Party was also founded which was dissolved a couple of months later. Then came the religious riot at Menemen where there were trials and executions. The committee of Union and Progress is a committee that became a political organization in 1906, during the dissolution period of the Ottoman Empire. It came to power between 1908 and 1918. At the end of World War I most of its members were court-martialled by the sultan Mehmed VI and imprisoned. A few of the members of the organization were executed in Turkey during the attempted assassination of Ataturk. Later the remaining members continued their political career in Turkey under Republican People's Party and other political parties as well. In 1932 Turkey became a member of the League of Nations.<sup>(9)</sup>

Actually, Ataturk used a nationalist ideology to organize the Turkish state. The committee of Union and progress shared Ataturk's view of Turkish Nationalism and his skepticism towards religion, yet the committee was committed to maintain their control of the Middle East throughout WWI. Arnold Toynbee (2003), recalls a conversation with an ITC (Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti's or [Committee of Union and Progress]) officer who suggested that "The Arabs could simply be Turkified, providing yet another, though unrealistic, way to reconcile political hegemony in the region with nationalist ideology."<sup>(10)</sup> On November 10<sup>th</sup> 1938 Mustafa Kamel Ataturk passed away. A following day Ismet Inonu from the Republican People's Party took over the Presidency. In 1947 Turkey voted in line with Arab states against the partitioning of Palestine in the United Nations. However, in 1949 it became the first Muslim nation to recognize the state of Israel.<sup>(11)</sup>

During the Cold War the President was Mehmut Celal Bayar , was Prime Minister during Inonu reign previously appointed by Ataturk. Tough differences of opinion with Inonu led him to lay down his office on January 25, 1939. Until 1945, he was a member of the Republican People's Party. Then on January 7, 1946, he founded the Democratic Party, a socially conservative economically liberal party, along with Adnan Menderes, Fuat Koprulu and Refik Koraltan. The Democratic Party won, with a majority in the first free general elections in Turkish history on May 14, 1950. The parliament elected Bayar, the chairman of the DP, as president of Turkey. He was subsequently re-elected in 1954 and 1957, serving for 10 years

as president. In that period, he used the Policy of Neutrality for example, balancing Arab and Israeli interests.<sup>(12)</sup>

Another Example is maintaining good relations with the Soviet Union as a continuum of Ataturk staying on good terms with the Soviet government as part of his policy of neutrality. Ataturk sought their support during the independence war, created an officially sanctioned communist party to win their sympathy and signed a ten-year friendship treaty with the Soviet Union as early as 1935. Still Turkey's membership in NATO was evidence of Turkey's European and Western identity in a time in which you were either communists or anti-communists in which the "East" was framed as a communist and the "West" was not. This helped develop its relations with the United States and to show that it was not communist as most of the East. A military junta staged a coup in 1960 and dissolved the National Assembly. Bayar was arrested, along with the other Democrat Party members of parliament. The junta court passed a death sentence on him and 14 of his colleagues. The sentence of Celal Bayar was later commuted to life imprisonment because of his age, and he was sent to the Kayseri prison. He was released from prison due to ill health in 1964. Celal Bayar remained an important figure in Turkish political life. Leaders and politicians of the center and the right consulted him and sought his advice. From 1960 to 1989 it was mainly the military who took control of the government.<sup>(13)</sup>

**iii. This Section will include:**

**a. The Impact of Cyprus Conflict on Turkish Foreign Policy:**

Cyprus is the Mediterranean's third largest island. It holds an important strategic location, and considered the corner stone in the east of the Mediterranean Sea. Today, the situation in Cyprus is as Whittaker (1999) said: "A 'Green Line', pock-marked with barbed wire and tank traps, bisects the island, with the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) in the south and centre, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) to the north. A UN peacekeeping force, UNFICYP, has maintained patrols and observation posts along that line for thirty-five weary, dangerous years. For those who 'think Greek' in language, tradition and culture in the ROC, there are two Cypruses—the one that must be Greek, the other that is Turkish and should be Greek."<sup>(14)</sup>

In the 19th century, the power of Russia enhanced and it posed threat to the Ottoman state and Britain, which was the super power, at the time. Britain became concerned about its vital road that passes through Gibraltar to India across Suez Canal. It realized access of Russia to Cyprus that stands at the eastern waist of the Mediterranean Sea, would place Suez Canal under the Russian threat. The Ottoman Empire, which had control over the island of Cyprus at the time realized the

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growing power of Russia and feared its access to Cyprus. Britain managed to convince, the Khaleefah Abdul Hameed to conclude an agreement, which apparently looked as protection of Cyprus against its occupation by Russia through temporary English presence in it, who would later on leave. An agreement was concluded between the Ottoman Empire and Britain in 1876. <sup>(15)</sup>

Starting in the early-nineteenth century, Greeks of the island sought to bring about an end to almost 250 years of Ottoman rule and unite Cyprus with Greece. The call for that aim, called enosis, grew louder after Britain took administrative control of the island. When the Ottoman Empire entered World War I on the side of the Central Powers, Britain renounced the agreement and all Turkish claims over Cyprus and declared the island a British colony. Sultan Abdul Hameed, who was known for his political shrewdness, knew the English persisted to have a foothold in Cyprus, with or without an agreement. So, he preferred the agreement with strict conditions, betting on the change of international situation and finally removing the British out. However, things did not go the way Sultan Abdul Hameed desired, for the British deposed him of power in 1908. Then, the First World War broke out in 1914; and Britain cancelled the treaty and took over Cyprus under the pretext of alliance between the Ottoman Empire and Germany against Britain in that war. After the rebellion of Mustafa Kamal against the Khaleefah by support from the British, Mustafa Kamal ordered his delegate led by Ismat Inonu, to sign in July 1923, a treaty with the British, in which the government in Ankara recognized the ultimate British authority over Cyprus and annexing it to Britain, thus considering it British territories. It was mentioned in the treaty of Mustafa Kamal that Cypriot Muslims have to accept either the Turkish or English nationality. However those who prefer the Turkish nationality have to leave the island. Cyprus continued to officially follow the British crown till 1959, when it was officially declared an independent republic. However, the situation in Cyprus became unstable to the English after World War II. Since Britain was weakened in the war and America raised as a super power. <sup>(16)</sup>

America had noticed the great political importance of Cyprus in relation to Asia, Europe and Middle East. So it determined to eliminate the British influence in it under the title of 'abolition of colonies'. Britain used to incite Turkey that was ally to it to oppose the Greek demands and to mobilize the Turkish public opinion against annexing of Cyprus to Greece, a matter, which the Turkish people reject.

A conference was held in London on August, 29, 1955 to study the situation in Cyprus. It included Turkey along side Greece to discuss the Cyprus issue. The conference did not come to any results because of the different views of the two state regarding Cyprus. However, the historical significance of London conference is that Turkey had been officially accepted for the first time as a party in the issue, from political aspect. Britain gave Cyprus its independence, where it changed to a



republic as a result of the talks in Zurich. These talks were concluded by signing the document of independence (Zurich Document). It gives both of the Turks and Greek in Cyprus the right of Veto concerning matters related to the independence of the island.<sup>(17)</sup>

Struggle continued over the island between America and Britain, where the first tries to remove the British influence and the British military bases, and the second tries to maintain its influence and bases.

Cyprus independence, reached in 1960 after negotiations amongst Turkey, Greece and Britain could not be successfully completed because of the conflict between the Greek population and the Turkish minority. A first Turkish attempt to occupy the island was disapproved by Lyndon Johnson, then president of the United States. Americans make clear that if the invasion 'brought the Soviet Union into the crisis, Washington would reconsider its NATO obligations to protect Turkey'.<sup>(18)</sup> The Turkish invasion was then cancelled. But after a new escalation of the conflict, Turkey occupied (1974) 37% of the island, opening a deep gap between the US and Turkey. The former suspended all military aid to Turkey, and Turkey reacted by closing several US bases in its territory. However since 1979, the relations between Turkey and the US became warmer again, but in the meantime there had been first a Turkish diplomatic approach to other countries, amongst them the Soviet Union. Parliamentary elections took place in Turkey in 1973. A coalition was formed between the Republican People party led by Bulent Ajawid and the National Salvation party led by Najmuddin Arbekan, which is extension to the National Order party. When Arbekan was in Europe, the British foreign minister declared, in the house of Common, the necessity of creating an Islamic party in Turkey. The Cyprus crisis produced an enormous disillusionment with the United States. The development of the conflict was quite clarifying of American position towards Turkey. The collation that was formed under the support of the British is the one that carried out the movement of 1974, which was a turning point in the Cypriot issue. This movement represents birth of Turkey, for it was the first military government in the life of the Republic.<sup>(19)</sup> The Turks controlled the northern part of the island, and they facilitated the entry of Turkish citizens to the island to increase the number of Turks in the island. This would balance the Greek majority in the island and sanction its permanent division between the two sects. In 15/11/1983, Ra'uf Danktash, the governor of the Turkish section of the island, announced the creation of the state of north Cyprus, with obvious British support through the military government in Turkey.<sup>(20)</sup>

In October 1981, Andres Papandreou was selected for Greek government. He immediately, in February 1982 went to Cyprus, where, he explained that Greece would act as a state and start 'a crusade campaign' against Turkey and the Cypriot Turks. He said the issue must be transferred to the UN, because it is an

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international issue. In other words, he spoke as a voice for the American policy. The UN took after that a resolution that recommends the immediate withdrawal of the Turkish army, which it called the occupier, from Cyprus. Then the council of the federal state of Cyprus (the Greek part) took a decision in 17 June 1982 regarding the right of the Cypriot people to self-determination. The Cypriot Turks answered back by declaring the creation of the Turkish republic of Cyprus in its north in 15 November 1983.

After the creation of the Turkish republic in north Cyprus, and the long period of the authority of Ozal, international meetings and discussions about Cyprus renewed, though lesser than it was before. In 1990, New York summit was held and United Nations Security Council adopted resolution number 649, through which the UN directed a call to the two sides in Cyprus to find out an acceptable solution, which carries the concept of two communities and two divisions. In 28 June 1991, Ozal informed the UN secretary, that he accepted the concept of quadrant summit that states the Cypriot issue must be between Turkey, Greece, the Turkish Cypriot republic and the Roman Cypriots. The intention of the quadrant summit was to exclude England; however it could not succeed because he died in office.<sup>(21)</sup> In January 1997, the EU declared the full membership of Cyprus is linked to the political solution, and the Turkish side must also take part in the EU recommendations. In December 1999, in Helsinki, Turkey was accepted within the list of the states recommended for the EU membership. In the summit of Helsinki, the EU made clear the necessity of finding a political solution for Cyprus. The summit of Helsinki came to clarify a balanced policy, which says to Turkey (solve the problem of Cyprus and join the EU), and says as well (if it is necessary, Cyprus can join as it is). Since Cyprus is an important strategic location, and because the EU suffered at that time of the international pressure, Cyprus was unlikely to be dispensable. Then the chairman of the EU council, Romano Prodi announced in 2001 that Cyprus could join the EU with its current situation, and without solving the problem. As a result Turkey replied it is ready to pay any price or alternative for the sake of Cyprus, so Cyprus talks continued.<sup>(22)</sup>

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002 the Justice and Development party led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan won an overwhelming majority in the elections and took over the power in Turkey. At that time, the UN secretary general presented his plan (Annan plan) to the parties in Cyprus, benefiting from the succession of America's allies to authority in Turkey. Under the shadow of the issue of Cyprus, membership of the EU and the American war against Iraq, the government of Erdogan undertook a standard number of visits and reception of foreign delegates. It also declared it will solve the problem of Cyprus, the membership of EU at the same time. It increased its pressure and Erdogan understood the radical change in the Turkish foreign policy, and its endeavor to solve the Cyprus issue according to "Annan plan". Therefore, Erdogan spoke harshly in January 2003, saying: "If Turkey is going to

abandon its national principles, and it is ready to accept Annan plan as it is, then let it declare that openly. In that case, they can find a person other than me that accepts this plan as it is, put his signature, and thus the problem would be solved".<sup>(23)</sup> The Annan Plan consisted of documents which contained every thing related to the arrangement/organization of the foreign and internal relations of Cyprus. Annan plan was presented to the Cypriot people in 24 April 2004 for voting, however, the result was unexpected, which meant the end of Annan plan. Thus, Cyprus remains a suspended and delicate issue yet to be solved.<sup>(24)</sup>

It is quite clear that the Cyprus issue was an important factor that directly effected Turkey's relations with the United States and the West in General and their stand from Turkey's quest for membership with the European Union.

#### **b. The Reign of Turgut Ozal and Neo-Ottomanism:**

On November 9<sup>th</sup> 1989 Turgut Ozal, from the Motherland Party, was elected president of Turkey. The Motherland Party or Anavatan Partisi, in Turkish and formerly abbreviated as ANAP) was founded in 1983 by Turgut Ozal and Mert Turk. The ANAP is considered a centre-right nationalist party which supported restrictions on the role that government can play in the economy, which favors private, capital and enterprise, and which allows for some public expressions of religion. When Ozal came into office a great change occurred in the Turkish foreign policy, not only because of the new president from a new party but also because of the ending of the Cold War. He confronted the power of the military and challenged secularist and nationalist views on numerous social issues.<sup>(25)</sup>

He aimed to demonstrate Turkey's continued value to the United States and NATO, which he viewed as valuable partners to Turkey even with the less or diminishing Soviet threat. "The tectonic forces that reshaped international relations at the end of the twentieth century—the collapse of the Soviet Union, ethnic conflicts in the Balkans and Eurasia, the growing stridency of Islamic fundamentalism, globalization of national economies, and increasing demands for democratization and civil society—also thrust Turkey into an increasingly pivotal role on the geopolitical stage."<sup>(26)</sup> Feroz Ahmed (2004) states: "Conventional wisdom concerning Turkish-Soviet relations after the Second World War informs us that Soviet demands and pressure on Turkey forced Ankara to seek Western support and to become an active participant in the Cold War. There may be some truth to this interpretation but it fails to consider domestic factors that led to a radical shift in Ankara's foreign policy. After the war both parties, the ruling Republicans and the opposition Democrats, believed that the fastest way to develop Turkey's economy and modernize its society was by injecting large doses of capital into the economy."<sup>(27)</sup>

Ozal sought opportunities to advance Turkish interests by enhancing its political regional influence and economic position. For example; he founded the BSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation) in 1992 to initiate relationships and reach out to countries which were off limits before. The economy was his primary motive. He was even known for having businessmen accompany him whenever he traveled abroad. As a result to this economic based policy, Turkey's Economy increased dynamically in his reign and it became much more interrelated with the world economy.

Ozal also wanted to show that Turkey could contribute militarily to what was called the "new world order", so in 1992-1993 during the United Nations involvement in Somalia Turkey took a prominent role in the US lead "Unified Task Force". In the 1990's it was viewed as an agent of the West in the Turkish Eurasia, to lay foundations for US economic and political connections in the region.

"Ottomanism" at the time generally referred to Ozal's vision for a more open and multicultural state. He saw the Ottomans as a historical example for incorporating Islamic and Kurdish identity into Turkish policy. This was his proposal to solve the Kurdish Issue.

The term "Neo-Ottomanism" however, was used by writers in contrast with the Kemalist policies of neutrality and non-alignment. Neo-Ottomanism favors a commonwealth with its neighbors and old Ottoman connections. Ozal saw that it was in fact ideology not pragmatism that had a greater effect on the difference between his approach and previous leader's approach to foreign policy. He, for example, saw that Ismet Inönü's policy of neutrality in the Second World War was overly cautious. <sup>(28)</sup>

Ozal died in office on April 17<sup>th</sup> 1993. Suleyman Demirel from the True Path Party (now called the Democrat party) took over. On March 10<sup>th</sup> 1995, he became aware of a coup attempt against Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliyev, prepared by his predecessor Ebulfeyz Elçibey with the assistance of the Turkish intelligence and security agencies, and warned Aliyev. Demirel was able to keep his position as President when he collaborated with the military during the 1997 "post-modern coup" in Turkey. He served as President until 16 May 2000, for the constitutional term of seven years. During his service he worked for the development and industrialization of the country as a director general at the age of 30 and a political party chairman and the youngest Turkish prime minister at the age of 40. He retired from his political career on May 16<sup>th</sup> 2000, and Ahmet Necdet Sezer, from the judiciary constitutional court of Turkey became President. <sup>(29)</sup>

Sezer was the first head of state to come from a judicial background. He was a firm defender of secularism, which was a point of disagreement between him and the upcoming rulers of the AKP on many issues. On many occasions, he openly

stated that the secular regime in Turkey was under threat but never gave any specific reasons. He believes that Islam doesn't require women to wear headscarf. For example, he excluded from official receptions at the Presidential Palace legislators' wives who wore a headscarf. During his presidency he has released 260 convicted prisoners, 202 of whom were captured leftist militants. This type of release can be requested directly by the felon or the legal representative of the felon, but no political or court referral is necessary. Sezer was very involved in what is called the "war on terror".<sup>(30)</sup>

### **c. From the Rise of AKP to the Present:**

Turkey's historic depth enhances its geographic depth according to Ahmet Davutoglu in "Strategic Depth Doctrine Of Turkish Foreign Policy" by Alexander Murinson (2006), calling on Turkey to "rediscover its historic and geographic identity" –which its traditional foreign policy neglected– he recommended a "balanced approach towards all global and regional actors" and "strong economic linkages with all regional states."<sup>(31)</sup> He argued that the Kemalists disengagement from the Islamic world as a result to its disengagement from Islamic and Ottoman Past and its Kemalist ideological fixation on Europe caused it to miss out on many opportunities. He focused on the strategic importance of the Muslim world.

On August 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 Abdullah Gul of the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) or the Justice and Development Party, also called White Party, took office. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey since 14 March 2003. He is also the chairman of the Justice and Development Party, which holds a majority of the seats in the Turkish Parliament. The AKP has pursued strategic depth through improved relations with explicitly Islamist regimes like Iran, but also by reaching out to non-Islamic countries and Islamic countries with non-Islamist governments. Recognizing that its policy is not an Islamist one makes it clear that, in trying to balance Turkey's strategic relationships rather than prioritize relations with the U.S. and NATO, the AKP has demonstrated continuity not only with Ozal's Neo-Ottomanism, but also with the non-alignment of Ataturk and Inonu. Though the AKP implemented strategic visions differently from Ozal's Neo-Ottomanism in the fact that for Ozal an activist regional policy was seen as a way to enhance ties with the United States. For AKP though, engaging with Turkey's Middle Eastern neighbors has to beat the expense of ties with the United States. So, while AKP could try to gain European Union membership in an Islamic domestic identity, it couldn't improve its relations with Syria, Iran, America, and Israel all at once. Though, it tends to side with America after all.<sup>(32)</sup>

The damaged American image after the Iraq War and its aftermath in 2003 makes it particularly difficult for Turkey to manage its relations with both America and the Middle East. Despite the fact that the Arab-Israeli re-approachment in the

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1990's particularly after the Madrid conference in 1991, which paved the way for Turkish-Israeli ties to build. Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000 and the Israeli-Lebanese War in 2006, made it more difficult for Turkey to balance its relations with Israel, America, and the Middle East. Turkey criticized America's genocide in Fallujah. European countries like France, Germany, and Britain criticized it as well. This all brings us to the distinction between Europe and America; not viewing them as one West but as separates with different contributions, views, and stands.

Syrian-Turkish relations were improved when Syria expelled PKK leader Abdullah Oclan in 1988 after his threat to attack Turkey. PKK (Partiya Karker Kurdistan or Kurdish Workers Party) is a Marxism armed cliché which beliefs in fighting. "The Kurdish Workers Party was founded in 1978 and launched an armed struggle against the government forces in 1984. The PKK -declared to be a terrorist organization not only by the Turkish government but also by the United States and several European countries- contends that the Kurds are entitled to a separate, independent state because of the discrimination they face in Turkey."<sup>(33)</sup> It's rejected globally even by Kurds mainly found in North Iraq and South East Turkey.

Iran-Turkish relations have also improved after the War on Iraq, and the situation after the war; which gave Turkey, Iran, and Syria common interests in avoiding the development of an independent Kurdish state. Iran also backed up Turkish criticism towards America's inactive, passive role towards the PKK and its president Ahmadi Najad offered public support for Turkey against the PKK. Iran also presented alleged evidence that America is supporting the PKK.

In addition, Erdoğan visit to Damascus in 2004 was questioned by the United States arising from Bush's "with us or against us" policy. Niger Goksel (2005) quotes Suleyman Demirel in his article "Turkey and Democratization in the Middle East": "While we claimed we wanted to smooth Turkish-U.S. relations we created serious tension over Syria. This was very wrong. No one asked Turkey to become Syria's enemy on behalf of America. But Turkey could have avoided acts that blatantly disturbed the U.S. This would not have bothered Syria... Turkey's foreign policy should be conducted in balance, nothing should be overdone."<sup>(34)</sup> Abdullah Gul's, the president of Turkey, visit to America on September 6<sup>th</sup> 2008 proves that the AKP has also pursued its "zero problem" policy with its neighbors. His trip was to attend the qualifying match between Armenia and Turkey, which was a great opportunity to open channels between the two estranged neighboring countries.<sup>(35)</sup>

It should be noted that the Turkish Policy towards the United States has been kept in balance since the 1991 Gulf War and its alliance with the United States against Iraq despite its different stance from the 2003 American War against Iraq.

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diplomatic profile in what some commentators call "neo-Ottomanism"<sup>(39)</sup> On New Year's Eve, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan launched a tour of the region. He visited Syria, Jordan and Egypt before concluding his trip in Saudi Arabia. "The trip is a gesture directed more for internal consumption with his domestic constituency and has little chance of success,"<sup>(40)</sup> said Athanasiadis quoting Cengiz Candar, a prominent political commentator who is credited with coining the term "neo-Ottomanism." The term refers to Turkish aspirations for influence in the Arab countries that were once part of the Ottoman Empire. The Foreign Ministry source that spoke with Today's Zaman said that the Arab world is no longer obsessed with a re-emergence of the Ottoman Empire and that they understand that when we refer to the Ottoman legacy, we refer to it with regard to the principles that provided peace and tranquility to various nations and religions, and not to the political body. Calls for an Ottoman Peace have recently been heard in the Turkish media, but what kind of an institutional foundation should provide for that peace is yet to be known.

Faraneh commented to Today's Zaman: "The recent open and declared position of Turkey has made Arabs realize that Turkey is a country friendly to Arabs and that Turks and Arabs share the same faith, the same culture and a common life."<sup>(41)</sup> Another indication of Turkey taking sides with the Arabs against Israel is the action of Erdogan in the Davos Economical Forum when he just left the forum after criticizing Shimon Perez's arrogant claims about the Israeli War on Gaza. Erdogan's opening speech there before he left was a major factor in the enhancement of the Arab public view of him and his country. He was received as a hero in the Arab and Muslim World, even though his country still has official ties with Israel.

Still after he appears to have sided with the Arabs he continues to carefully direct his relations with others for he has not forgotten Turkey's European neighbors. On July 13<sup>th</sup> 2009, four European Union countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania) signed an agreement with Turkey to construct a gas pipeline that it is hoped would reduce their reliance on supplies from Russia. The project is aimed at avoiding a repetition of supply cuts that disrupted Russian supplies to Europe last winter, during an energy dispute between Ukraine and Moscow. About one quarter of all gas used in Europe currently comes from Russia, with several southern European countries depending almost exclusively on Russian supplies. But Ferran Tarradellas, the EU energy commissioner's spokesman, told Al Jazeera news channel that the principle purpose of the project was not to freeze Russia out of the European gas market. He said: "Nabucco is not a project against Russia. The competition is good for everybody, we don't want to exclude anybody,"<sup>(42)</sup> Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish prime minister, said that Russia and Iran even join the project "when conditions allow".<sup>(43)</sup>

## Conclusion

As it has been shown through the previous analysis, many factors have affected Turkey's foreign policy over the years. Ideology and Pragmatics have seemed to interleave over the years, one rising over the other, depending on the ruling party at the time. Atatürk's anti-Islamist to start with and Arab "Turkifying" policies and his disengagement from the Islamic world, and therefore the Kamelist ideological fixation on Europe. His neglect of Pragmatics caused him and his country to miss out on many opportunities, not only in the Arab and Muslim worlds but also with the West who still reject Turkey to be a member of the European Union, with the clear reason of the Muslim population.

Later presidents like Inonu and Bayar were more aware of pragmatics and focused on the policy of neutrality. Ozal came to challenge Secularist views and to promote Neo-Ottomanism. He seized opportunities to advance Turkish interests by enhancing its political and economic positions in the region. Ozal, some might say, tried to balance the two factors. His successor Demiral focused on development and industrialization. Sezer unlike Ozal came to defend Secularism, which was also a point of disagreement between him and his successors, the AKP, which is an organization of Islamist roots. The AKP focused and still focuses on the "zero problem" policy. Despite the tension between it and Israel during the war on Gaza it tries to on good terms with its neighbors and also European countries. The gas pipeline deal is an example of the implementation of this policy. Turkey's stand with the Arabs during Gaza surely was not free of sincerity but it also was not free of an attempt to show its great influence and power and some might argue that it was a sign to the Europeans that Turkey might turn to its rich Arab and Muslim world if it's not welcomed by Europe.

As we can see the Policy of Turkey has multiple turning points it is relatively unstable and changes with different parties ruling the country, but this is a factor that is becoming quite stable not only for Turkey but all countries, which is to think of Turkey itself and its well being and interests before all others.

European leaders would be naïve to expect that Turkey's Kemalist, "pro-Western" imperative will keep it on track towards EU membership in the face of repeated rejection, but they should also realize that the economic and political benefits of EU membership will continue to influence Turkish leaders from all ideological backgrounds. From Turkey's perspective, the most serious risk is that foreign policy makers would actually allow their ideology to shape their decisions instead of just their pragmatic aware rhetoric.

Turkey's unique contacts with all the major actors in the region, as well as its membership in NATO, have positioned it to mediate the area's conflicts. Turkey



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 has greatly expanded its diplomacy in the Middle East under the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), Ahmet Davutoglu, an academic and an Erdogan confidant, is the architect of a policy embracing Turkey's cultural and Muslim background to make the country the indispensable power in the region. In his book "Strategic Depth", (2003) Mr. Davutoglu argues that Turkey's position at the crossroads of the Middle East, Central Asia, Europe and the Caucasus, its former leading role in the Islamic world and its current pro-Western orientation can transform it into the region's pivotal diplomatic power. The diversity of Turkey's Geographical, religious, and historical background does in fact give it a unique importance in the region.<sup>(44)</sup> Because of this importance Turkey's current policy enjoy support from across the political spectrum, there is ample reason to believe that the tradition of pragmatism will triumph.

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